

# Plenty of Room at the Top for the Actress of To-day

Managers in Desperate Need Comb Every Field for Women to Fill Leading Roles—Salaries Rise in Proportion to Shortage—Movies Lose Many



DORIS KENYON WHOM A. H. WOODS TOOK FROM THE MOVIES WHERE HE NEEDED AN ACTRESS.



MARGARET LAWRENCE WHO WAS UNKNOWN UNTIL "TEA FOR THREE" MADE HER POPULAR



MIMI AGUGLIA WHO HAS BEEN BROUGHT FROM THE ITALIAN STAGE BY JOHN CORT.



DOROTHY DALTON WHO CAME FROM THE SCREEN TO ACT "APHRODITE"



EDITH DAY WHO BECAME THE POPULAR STAR OF "IRENE" AFTER SHE HAD BEEN SEEN HERE ONLY IN "GOING UP"



INA CLAIRE WHOM DAVID BELASCO FOUND IN "THE FOLLIES" AND MADE A STAR.

By LUCIEN CLEVES.

HOW would you like to earn, say, a salary of \$200 a week? How would you like to work for that not more than three hours every week night and twice in the afternoons? And how would you like to enjoy along with this comfortable income all the pleasures that go with the career of a popular actress?

Of course the money might be almost indefinitely magnified in amount. It might be \$500 every week or even \$600 or \$700. But that would come later. Yet almost any actress of a leading role in a first class company is going to get at least as much as \$200. For the fact is that leading actresses in the new plays constantly put forward by the managers are very difficult to find. There never was a time in which it was more difficult to find competent actresses for the numerous productions. Managers are often at a loss to find out where they will find the women who are to have the responsibility of acting the principal parts. The numbers are now so great every year that the supply of actresses in the leading roles has become completely inadequate. For every other kind of a part there are plenty of women and the men are not so scarce as to embarrass the managers. But the women are not to be found. There was never such an opportunity before for the talented young leading woman as there is to-day. It is not probable, moreover, that there will be any diminution in her field. Already the managers are saying that the theatres are too scarce for the size of the population here. New playhouses are now contemplated for the coming season and more plays will be required for them. This means that more actresses will be needed. Where are they to come from?

## Where Belasco Finds Them.

"I go to musical shows," says David Belasco, who develops more stars than any other manager, "and there I find Ina Claire. I go to a travelling company in Harlem and find Lenore Ulric. The actresses exist. They are to be found. But it is necessary for the managers to go out and seek them."

Maybe the movies have absorbed some of the players, but it is true that the supply has not kept pace with the demand in view of the great increase of theatrical enterprise. Then the present tendency of the popular movie actor is to return to the spoken drama. The demand is so great that the cinema stars are gladly coming back to play once more in the dramatic theatres. But there are occasional movie favorites who serve well in the dramas that the New York managers are giving. Dorothy Dalton came from the screen to play the leading role in the most discussed dramatic production of the year. This is "Aphrodite." But before Morris Gest took her he was in despair as to the source of the actress who was to have this role. Miss Dalton had some dramatic experience, as well as some dramatic training in a Chicago college of acting. But it was really as a cinema actress that she became

known. When A. H. Woods wants to cast a play he turns to the movies. There he found Doris Kenyon for "The Girl in the Limousine," and for "Up in Mabel's Room" he got Hazel Dawn and Lucy Cotton from the ateliers.

So great is the desire of the managers to bring new talents before the public that the Shuberts have turned to the musical plays. There they found Peggy Hopkins, Isabel Laws and Margot Kelly, who last week assumed a dramatic role in "Carnival." John Cort thought of Mimi Aguglia, and persuaded her to leave her Italian following and take a place among the English-speaking actresses. Thus do the managers search on every side for the women who are to take the leading roles in their plays and at the same time appeal to their public. For the theatregoers of this country insist on a personality at the head of every company. There are not many of these when one thinks that the only stars produced during the last few years have been Fay Bainter and Margaret Lawrence. Yet there is not a manager who is not every day seeking some pretty, talented and sufficiently experienced young woman to put at the head of a company.

"The demand is so great," Mr. Shubert said to the Sun reporter, "that we must seek everywhere for new personalities. The public likes familiar faces up to a certain extent, but there is nothing more attractive to theatregoers than the fresh and young talent. There is therefore a splendid opportunity for the young women who can take leading roles. It needs a certain amount of beauty, although this is not indispensable, a certain degree of adaptability to the theatre and above all, youth. These do not seem very severe qualifications, but they are rare enough. We are constantly seeking new talents."

Edgar Selwyn was hurrying down to a rehearsal of "The Great Illusion," which he is directing for A. H. Woods, when the writer stopped him last Wednesday morning to find out how he and his "Brother Arch" manage to get the right girl for the right part in the many plays which they produce.

"To the playgoer who sees only the finished production I presume it looks simple enough to have cast it," commented the playwright-producer with a smile. "I've often thought I would like to have the casual onlooker at a play follow the processes of its production from the time the manuscript is completed. It would be an education as well as a revelation to him, I am sure. Of course the casting is the most important feature of the work—and the most difficult. As you say, 'the right girl for the right part.' Only," Mr. Selwyn added thoughtfully, "your question should not be confined to girls, for it is just as hard to secure the right man for the right feature of the work—and the most difficult because there are more historically inclined women than men. I can cite no better example than my experience with 'Wedding Bells.' It wasn't nearly so difficult to decide that Miss Lawrence and Mr. Edginger were just the right com-

bination for the leading roles as it was to find a player who could portray the languorous poet. I delved into the recesses of my memory where I have stored away every player I have ever seen in the theatre to find one who could give just the right touch to this role, and none could I find. I interviewed scores of new people and tried them out in the part, but none of them just filled the bill to my satisfaction, until I remembered Clarke Silvernail, an actor unknown to Broadway but whom I had seen draw a remarkable character delineation in stock. It was not until just three days before the New York opening of the Field comedy at the Harris Theatre in November that I found him, but as soon as he had read the part I knew that he was just the man I wanted.

## The Right Way.

"The right way to produce a play is to accept it months ahead of its presentation," the president of Selwyn & Co. continued. "This enables the producer to give each role the proper consideration and secure the right man or woman to fill it as the case may demand. To know just who is the right player for it I try to keep touch with all the people of the stage with whom it is possible to keep in touch. I personally see every play that is produced in New York and many which are offered outside, and make a point of being acquainted with stock companies; of seeing folk on the vaudeville stage, and when I know I am to need a certain type of comedian I even see the best of the burlesque shows. When and wherever I find a player who has a real ability I tabulate both the player and his or her special talents in my mind, and when I am getting ready for a production I try to keep before me in mental array for examination."

Asked how he proves his judgments regarding the ability of people, Mr. Selwyn said that he tries out from one to two dozen ambitious young folk almost every day in the week.

"There were eight yesterday in 'Wedding Bells' alone. Eight girls to whom I had given the roles of Rosalie and Marcia to understudy. Not with a view to their playing these parts, but rather because each of these roles embraces so much that they are excellent tests of what a young woman may be able to do. In addition to the people whom I personally see, my stage director is constantly trying out newcomers, and there is never an instance in which he tells me that a girl has any real talent that I do not personally

see her and make an effort to gauge what she can do.

"I believe in the newcomer," Mr. Selwyn went on to say. "It is the only way to keep our romances of the world of make-believe fragrant with springtime freshness. I never begrudge the hour taken from a busy day for the girl who believes she has the divine fire. Perhaps there isn't a spark of genius there. In the nine cases out of ten there isn't. But even if the percentage where it is found were but one out of a hundred it would be still worth the time and the patience and the trouble it requires to find out."

William A. Brady is inclined to think that the cinema has had much to do with the scarcity of actresses, although he believes that they will all be back in the spoken drama soon. He said to THE SUN reporter:

"That times change in the theatre just as surely and as completely as they do everywhere else in this strike-ridden land of ours is probably no more vividly illustrated than in the current rush of celluloid celebrities of the silver sheet to profitable places behind the footlights of the so-called legitimate stage. Time was, and not so long ago, when the strictly motion picture folk were the object of sneers. It was contended that continued appearance on the screen meant death to popularity on the stage. Various Broadway managers, feeling that motion picture work would cheapen and ultimately destroy the box office value of their artists, frequently demanded a clause in employment contracts prohibiting their artists' participation in motion picture work.

"But times have changed. The Broadway managers have seen a light and one that has opened their eyes exceedingly wide. In consequence there is to be observed this season a strange phenomenon. Players whose popularity the country over has been secured solely or tremendously heightened through the medium of the motion picture screen are in demand as never before. A. H. Woods, for example, takes Doris Kenyon from the pictures and places her prominently in 'The Girl in the Limousine'; Morris Gest selects Dorothy Dalton for 'Aphrodite,' just revealed at the Century and in which Miss Dalton has scored an emphatic personal success; Elsie Ferguson's return to the footlights has just been announced, and Pauline Frederick is in daily and insistent demand for the Broadway stage. Billie Burke is combining stage and screen

work while playing in 'Cesar's Wife,' and Madge Kennedy has offers to go back to Forty-second street and appear in the flesh in farce like 'Fair and Warner.'

Ethel Barrymore, now at the height of her career in 'Deeds,' is shortly to start a picture. John Barrymore is now active in the studio filming 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr.

## What's in 4,500,000 Names

STATISTICS, while they may not prove very much, are always interesting, and few of the millions compiled annually are more interesting or amusing than those recently made public by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, which has listed practically all of the names of the soldiers in the American army. These lists cover virtually 4,500,000 men, and in the card indexes are listed the names of 53,200 Johnsons, the most numerous family in time in the bureau records, and for the first time in history, perhaps, outdistancing the Smith family in the matter of numbers. The Smiths stand second in the list, with 51,950 members in the army, while the Browns are third with 48,000 names. Then in the order named come the Joneses, 28,050 strong; the Andersons, with 22,000 names, and the Walkers, with 18,500.

Of the 53,200 Johnsons 2,183 were christened John and 2,062 William. The favorite Christian name in the Smith family is William, being borne by 3,412 Smiths, while John was the given name of 2,625 Smiths. Of the 48,000 Browns who wore the uniform of America 2,000

were named John, while of the Williams family 2,880 signed up as Willie Williams and 170 as William Williams. There were 900 John Andersons; 800 were christened Carl and 600 Charles.

Only a few months ago a soldier named John J. O'Brien wrote to the Bureau of War Risk Insurance about his insurance; he gave no serial or certificate number, but said he could be identified by the fact that the beneficiary, his wife, was named Mary A. O'Brien. The research workers at the bureau looked through the files and discovered that it had 175 men listed as John J. O'Brien, and the wives of forty of them bore the name of Mary A.

Many prominent men were represented by namesakes in the American Army. There were 125 George Washingtons, six named General Washington, 119 Robert E. Lees, forty-seven John Quincy Adamases, five Abraham Lincolns, and one each of General Grant, General Wellington, General Pickett, General Jackson and Napoleon Bonaparte. But curiously enough none of these held higher rank than private.

The Rodriguez family from Porto

Rico, according to the files of the bureau, sent 894 men into the American forces, and among this number, almost a battalion, there were but seven first names: Domingo, Francisco, Jose, Juan, Roman, Tomas and Antonio.

A worker in the files of the bureau recently discovered that the name Aloysius was spelled by the soldier owners in forty-nine different ways, and the name Ignatz in eighteen. Even the simple name of John is spelled in twenty-four ways: John, Giovanni, Ian, Jac, Jack, Jackie, Jacques, Jan, Jans, Hans, Jean, Jno, Joahn, Jock, Johan, Johann, Johannes, Johni, Johnie, Johnnie, Johnny, Johny, Jon and Jaan.

Some of the Great White Father's Indian soldiers bore melodious if somewhat complicated names. A few of them are: Harry Cries for Rib, George Sleeps from House, Benjamin Comes Out Bear, David Drops at a Distance, Charles Owl Walks in the House, Wash Day Clouds and Isaac His Horse Is Fast. The town of Salmon, Idaho, furnished the army with a soldier who had five given names: Harry Adolph Thomas Richard Eugene Bullock.